



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH
*1102 SE Quince Street • PO Box 47990
Olympia, Washington 98504-7990*

December 10, 2003

TO: Washington State Board of Health Members
FROM: Craig McLaughlin, Board Staff
**RE: DRAFT STATEMENT OF BOARD POLICY ON POSSIBLE
2004 LEGISLATIVE ISSUES**

Background and Summary

State Board of Health Policy 2001-001 creates a procedure for monitoring legislative issues during session. It also establishes processes for communication between Board members and the Legislature. The Board revised this policy in December 2002, and one of the changes adopted allowed for the creation of a “sense of the Board” document that could inform staff and individual Board members as issues came up during legislative session. (The revised policy is attached.)

At its January 8, 2003 meeting, the Board approved a “sense of the Board” document for the 2003 session. For today’s meeting, I have provided for initial review and discussion a proposed update to that document. After modification and adoption by the Board, the “Statement of Board Policy on Possible 2004 Legislative Issues” could serve as a guidance document for the 2004 legislative session, an interim or “short session” that convenes January 12, 2004. The agenda allows for possible action on this item, but I am recommending that the Board approve a version of this document on January 14, 2004, when it will have more information about the 2004 session.

When the Board approved the original 2003 iteration of this document, I provided a list of issues that were likely to come up that session. I am currently working on such a list for the 2004 session, which will be available in January. As an interim measure, the discussion section of this memo lists some of the issues related to Board activities that the Legislature is likely to deal with in 2004.

Recommended Board Action

None. I recommend the Board review and comment now, and consider final adoption in January.

Discussion

The attached draft of a possible “Statement of Board Policy on Possible 2004 Legislative Issues” is closely modeled on the sense of the Board adopted on January 8, 2003. It has been updated to reflect emerging legislative issues and the Board’s more recent policy work—for example, the

values statement adopted in advance of the Health Leadership Summit hosted by the Washington Health Foundation.

The 2004 legislative session, an interim or “short session,” convenes January 12, 2004. Bills that did not pass in the 2003 session could be reintroduced as two-year bills. Proposed legislation tracked by the Board last session that could be revived this session include:

SHB 1068 HB 1646 SSB 5764	Public water fluoridation
SHB 2015	Small employer health insurance
SB 5059	Genetic information discrimination
SB 5060 HB 1412	Children's environmental health
SB 5085	Water recreation facilities
SB 5313	Health care recovery act
SB 5421 HB 1825	Newborn hearing screening
SB 5495	Environmental health tracking system
SSB 5521 HB 1871	Health insurance
SSB 5807	Basic health plan revision
SB 5920 HB 2070	Local public health services
SB 5929	Genetic information

The Department of Health (DOH) is pursuing few pieces of departmental request legislation. They do not directly pertain to the Board’s priorities or statutory authorities—most relate to professional licensing. One, however, was addressed in the 2003 sense of the Board because of possible ties to the Board’s work on increasing the diversity of the health care workforce. DOH is also seeking additional funding for its zoonotics program.

Several constituencies are considering legislation the would remove them from Board rules:

- Some homeless shelter operators would like a legislation exemption from the transient accommodations rule.
- Adult family homes want employees exempted from food worker card requirements.
- Church and community groups may seek to have potlucks excluded from the requirements of the food code.
- The building industry may seek legislation allowing septic systems on smaller lots than would be allowed under lot restrictions being considered by the on-site advisory committee.

House Democrats have formed the Washington CARES Task Force. It is looking to develop a legislative agenda that would improve economic security and help people meet their basic needs, protect vulnerable individuals and increase accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness of social and health services. Senate Democrats have engaged in similar fact-finding efforts. Both are looking at possible health care reform. It is not clear whether these will lead to legislation this session. Finally, the Governor’s Office is developing a rural health package.

Attachments